

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANILA 03861 01 OF 02 160744Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----160749Z 053885 /15

P R 160637Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7189

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 3861

EXDIS

FROM PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION

E O 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, LA, US
SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION VISIT TO LPDR

REF: (A) VIENTIANE 518; (B) VIENTIANE 506

1. COMMISSION APPRECIATES VIENTIANE'S HELPFUL COMMENTS
AND INFORMATION REF B.

2. COMMISSION PLANS TO MAKE PRESENTATION TO LAO ALONG
FOLLOWING GENERAL LINES (PROBABLY AT MARCH 19 SESSION
WITH NOUPHAN BUT IN WHOLE OR PART AT OTHER MEETINGS WITH
LAO ALSO AS APPROPRIATE), WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS
AND SUGGESTIONS VIENTIANE MAY HAVE FOR COMMISSION'S
CONSIDERATION ON ARRIVAL.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S VISIT TO LAOS

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARKS

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASKED THE COMMISSION TO DELIVER
THIS LETTER FROM HIM FOR PRESIDENT SOUPAHNOUVONG TO
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SECRET

PAGE 02 MANILA 03861 01 OF 02 160744Z

INTRODUCE THE COMMISSION AND TO EXPLAIN ITS PURPOSE.

THE COMMISSION WAS SPECIALLY APPOINTED BY PRESIDENT
CARTER WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO VISIT YOUR COUNTRY TO SEEK
INFORMATION ON THE FATE OF AMERICANS MISSING OR KILLED
IN LAOS. THE COMMISSION HOPES TO BE ABLE TO OBTAIN
REMAINS OF OUR DEAD. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ALSO INSTRUCTED

THE COMMISSION TO LISTEN TO YOUR GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON
MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN AND TO REPORT THESE VIEWS
DIRECTLY TO HIM.

PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS NEW ADMINISTRATION HAVE
BEGUN A REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM, LAOS AND
CAMBODIA. THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED US TO ASSURE YOU THAT
HE DESIRES GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC AND THAT THE USG HAS NO HOSTILE INTENTIONS TOWARD
YOUR GOVERNMENT. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS KEEPING AN
OPEN MIND ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH
THE INDOCHINA STATES, AND WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR VIEWS ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF US-LAO RELATIONS. THE PRESIDENT HOPES
THAT OUR GOVERNMENTS CAN WORK FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN
RELATIONS WHICH WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH OUR
COUNTRIES.

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

THE MIA ISSUE

-- PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ATTACH
GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OBTAINING THE BEST ACCOUNTING POSSIBLE
FOR THE AMERICANS WHO ARE LISTED AS MISSING OR PRESUMED
DEAD BUT WHOSE BODIES HAVE NOT BEEN RECOVERED. WE
UNDERSTAND THAT THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND THE DIFFICULT
TERRAIN IN MUCH OF LAOS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN
INFORMATION ABOUT THESE MEN. WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT THE
LAO AUTHORITIES HAVE TOLD AMERICAN OFFICIALS DURING THE
PAST YEAR THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO LOOK FOR CRASH

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANILA 03861 01 OF 02 160744Z

SITES OR ANY EVIDENCE OF AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THE
WAR. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY DEFINITE INFORMATION THE LAO
HAVE ON ANY OF THE SOME 550 OF OUR MISSING AND DEAD.

-- WE ARE WILLING TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE LAO IN
CASUALTY RESOLUTION. WE HAVE, IN THE PAST, SUPPLIED CASE
FILES AND OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US ON SOME OF
OUR MEN WHO DISAPPEARED IN LAOS. WE COULD PROVIDE MORE
OF THESE FILES IF THEY WOULD ASSIST IN A SEARCH FOR
MISSING AMERICANS. WE WOULD ALSO BE WILLING TO PROVIDE
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LAO EFFORTS IN SEARCHING FOR
THESE MEN.

--PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ENTRUSTED THE COMMISSION
WITH THE TASK OF BRINGING BACK ANY DEFINITE INFORMATION
THE LAO CAN SUPPLY AT THIS TIME ON OUR MISSING --
INFORMATION THAT IS EAGERLY AWAITED BY THEIR BERAVED
FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THE PRESIDENT HAS EXPRESSED HIS
PERSONAL HOPE THAT THE COMMISSION WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN

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PAGE 01 MANILA 03861 02 OF 02 160748Z
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----160753Z 053964 /15

P R 160637Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7190

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 3861

EXDIS

WITH REMAINS OF OUR DEAD AND THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES CAN
AGREE TO COOPERATE TOWARD THE RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE.

-- PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT STEP
TOWARD IMPROVEMENT OF U.S.-LAO RELATIONS, WHICH THE
PRESIDENT BELIEVES WOULD BE IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH
OUR COUNTRIES.

OTHER ISSUES

-- THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED BY PRESIDENT
CARTER TO EMPHASIZE TWITH THE LAO AUTHORITIES THE DESIRE
OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH LAOS.

-- THE COMMISSION CAN ASSURE THE LAO AUTHORITIES
THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HARBORS NO HOSTILE
INTENTIONS TOWARD THE LPDR AND IS NOT SUPPORTING ANY
INSURGENT MOVEMENT OR ACTIVITY EITHER IN LAOS OR ABROAD.

-- WE HAVE SEEN ARTICLES IN THE LAO PRESS ABOUT THE
RE-OPENING OF U.S. BASES IN THAILAND. WE HAVE NO PLANS
TO RE-OPEN BASES IN THAILAND, NOR HAS THE THAI GOVERNMENT
MADE ANY PROPOSAL TO THAT EFFECT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANILA 03861 02 OF 02 160748Z

-- THE COMMISSION IS AUTHORIZED TO REPORT FULLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON THE VIEWS OF THE LAO AUTHORITIES ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN AND INVITES THE VIEWS OF THE LPDR LEADERS ON MOVING TOWARD AN IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-LAO RELATIONS.

-- IF ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF U.S. AID TO LAOS, THE COMMISSION SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT CURRENT U.S. LEGISLATION (THE 1977 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT) RESTRICTS OFFICIAL AID TO LAOS, AS WELL AS VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. THIS ATTITUDE DERIVES AT LEAST PARTLY FROM THE LACK OF COOPERATION RECEIVED FROM THESE GOVERNMENTS ON THE MIA ISSUE. THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT OPPOSED ASSISTANCE FOR LAOS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. IN FACT, THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES A SUBSTANTIAL SHARE OF THE REGULAR FUNDS FOR SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE PROGRAMS IN LAOS NOW, FOR EXAMPLE THE UNDP, UNICEF, WHO AND THE FAO. THE U.S. DOES NOT, HOWEVER, ACCEPT AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE AID TO LAOS UNDER THE 1973 PARIS AGREEMENT. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD HOPE THAT WE CAN PUT THE PAST BEHIND US AND WORK TO ESTABLISH A NEW CLIMATE OF GOODWILL IN U.S.-LAO RELATIONS. THE SUCCESS OF THIS VISIT CAN BE SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THAT DIRECTION.

-- IF THE LAO RAISE THE ISSUE OF OUR SENDING A U.S. AMBASSADOR TO LAOS: THE COMMISSION WILL TAKE BACK THE LPDR VIEW TO PRESIDENT CARTER FOR CONSIDERATION IN HIS REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE LPDR AND THE OTHER NEW GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION. THE RESULTS OF THE COMMISSION'S VISIT ARE LIKELY TO FIGURE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THAT REVIEW. THE COMMISSION WOULD HOPE THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD BEGIN TO WORK TOWARD AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF U.S.-LAO RELATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS APPROPRIATE. WOODCOCK. SULLIVAN

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SECRET

PAGE 03 MANILA 03861 02 OF 02 160748Z

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